

the outstanding contributions of so many proud and courageous individuals: black, white, men, women, young and old. These men and women have given hope in the bleakest of times and allowed us, as a society, to make strides toward equality once considered impossible.

Recognizing that emancipation was only the beginning of the fight for true equality, the NAACP was founded with the ideals of creating and preserving equal citizenship for all men and women throughout America. Knowing that there is still work to be done, it is the vision of the NAACP that, one day, all individuals will have equal rights and the United States will see an end to racial hatred and discrimination. As the first page of the NAACP Constitution indicates, the principal goals of the organization are: to ensure political, educational, social, and economic equality, to eliminate racial prejudice in America, to remove racial barriers through the democratic process, to secure civil rights, to inform the public and seek the elimination of racial discrimination, and to educate individuals about their constitutional rights.

In the First Congressional District, I am proud to serve as the representative for three branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. At this time, I would like to pay special tribute to these three groups, which have played such a critical role, locally, in the fight for racial equality and in improving Northwest Indiana for all residents. These three outstanding representatives of the First Congressional District include the East Chicago Branch, led by President Philip Hinton, the Gary Branch, led by President Karen Pulliam, and the Hammond Branch, led by President Mary Aaron.

It is the efforts of organizations like these that allow us to reflect on what makes the United States of America so special. Nowhere else in the world do you find such an integrated society. While the United States is made up of people from so many different racial, religious, social, and ideological backgrounds, it is the efforts of the many brave citizens who have fought and continue to struggle for equality that have made America what it is.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in remembering the many brave men and women who have led the struggle for equality among all Americans, and I ask that you join me in honoring the work and tireless dedication of the members of organizations, such as the NAACP, who continue their selfless work today. Through the efforts of these honorable individuals and organizations, we are reminded of how far we have come as a nation, while realizing that there is still progress to be made.

#### REDUCING OVER-CLASSIFICATION ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 3, 2009*

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker,

I rise in strong support of H.R. 553, The Reduce Over-Classification Act of 2009. This measure will allow the expansion of information that the Department of Homeland Security shares with state and local governments. The bill also will require "portion marking" which refers to the identification of paragraphs in a document that are classified, but allows the unclassified portions to be viewed.

The measure requires the department to develop the policies, procedures and programs to prevent the over-classification of information relating to weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, homeland security or other matters within the scope of the information-sharing environment that must be disseminated in order to prevent and respond to acts of terrorism.

The practical, day-to-day processes will be done in coordination with the National Archives and Records Administration but in reality it will require full-fledged cooperation from the Department of Homeland Security and the very able staff that make up its workforce.

This legislation requires all finished intelligence products to be prepared in the standard unclassified format, provided that an unclassified product would serve to benefit state and local governments.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to see that the bill directs the Homeland Security Department, in coordination with the NARA, to require annual training for employees and contractors with classification authority who are responsible for analysis, dissemination, preparation, production, receiving, publishing, or otherwise communicating written classified information. This training would include information on the department's policy for preparing all finished intelligence products in a standard unclassified format, as well as information on the proper use of classification markings, including portion markings. Training would also cover the consequences of over-classification and other improper uses of classification.

Under the bill, the training would serve as a prerequisite, once completed successfully, for obtaining classification authority and renewing that authority on an annual basis, and it would count as a positive factor for employment, evaluation, and promotion.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation also requires that DHS create standard and unclassified formats for the department's finished intelligence products. This bill is designed to ensure citizen and government access to unclassified information but I believe it strikes the right balance between calculated information flow and the protection of national security.

I am pleased Mr. Speaker that Section 210 of this bill allows employees to challenge classification decisions made by department employees or contractors and be rewarded if the classification markings are removed or downgraded.

And my colleagues and I are well aware that no piece of legislation is completed without measures designed to ensure compliance, and that's why it is critical to the ultimate success of this bill that a series of penal provisions were included to reinforce the legislation.

H.R. 553 is about preventing over-classification. My hope is that the legislation will serve as a proper deterrent and move us away from the hoarding of non-classified information that characterized the previous administration.

Open and accessible government is a hallmark of democracy. Citizens shouldn't live in fear of their government. It is OUR government.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this measure.

HONORING TYLER WADE KUEHN

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 4, 2009*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Tyler Wade Kuehn of Platte City, Missouri. Tyler is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 351, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Tyler has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Tyler has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Tyler Wade Kuehn for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION TO  
PREVENT VIOLENCE

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 4, 2009*

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 748, the "Campus Safety Act of 2009," H. Res. 82, which establishes January 2009 as National Stalking Awareness Month, and H. Res. 103, which supports the goals and ideals of National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week. These bills will help to combat violence, disseminate safety information, and raise awareness about these critical issues.

All Americans should feel safe in their communities, their workplaces, their schools, and their homes. Everyone, but particularly children and teens, should have access to the necessary resources to recognize a violent or abusive relationship and to get out safely. I believe that it is particularly important in this day of instant communication that we educate young people about the unintended consequences of sharing too much information on the Internet or via a cell phone. While these are valuable tools to communicate in the 21st century, they can also pose new and sometimes unexpected dangers.

We all must be aware of the warning signs of violent relationships whether they are affecting our friends, our neighbors, or our children. The bills before us today show that we will not tolerate the violence, abuse, and sexual assault that pervade our society. I urge my colleagues to support these important bills.